

Day 5: Northallerton to Ripon

The only word to describe today is generosity. Starting with a great breakfast and send off from the Forum in Northallerton, to the first pit stop with Roy Hutchings in Marton on Swale who opened his house for our mid-morning break, to Drs Jenny and Roger Fiskens of Burneston who not only laid out a fantastic lunch including an amazing Save Our NHS cake! but also had a marquee in the garden in case it rained (thankfully it did not). And it was not over yet because the ladies at the Methodist Church in Ripon had prepared a meal catering to all of us, vegetarians and vegans included. To top it all, they had also written a song:

“We’ll save our NHS

We’ll keep our NHS

Public and free.

We’ll not believe their lies

We’ll not compromise

We’ll keep our NHS

Public and free”

Fantastic North Yorkshire hospitality – thanks everyone.

Being rural, there are some obvious health issues and there is a Save Our Friarage (local hospital) campaign going on at present. It looks like some serious discussions will be needed to get the right balance between access, safety and affordability.

We were again joined by colleagues who travelled from far and wide, sharing their own stories- problems with ensuring 7/7 services or the tendering of mental health services.

Having (again) watched Michael Moore’s film ‘Sicko’ last night, people were more determined to carry on with the 999callforNHS and absolutely committed to never even going back to the pre NHS days, or allowing the American system. I had seen it before but it was worth watching again, and with colleagues. Although I have just come back from yet another visit to USA, I have never been a fan of US health system (as opposed to world class specific institutions). Of course Michael Moore exaggerated things and I doubt that the GP in the film would be as positive in 2014. The film, however, took me back to Che Guevara’s “Revolutionary Medicine” speech, and I quote him:

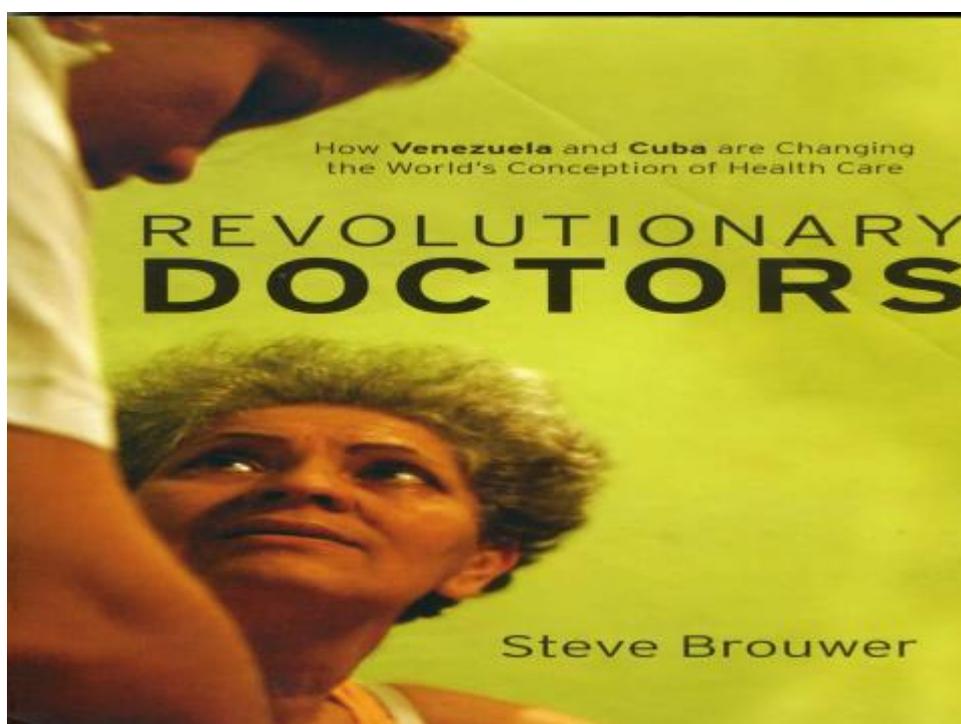
“I began to travel throughout America. First as a student and later as a doctor, I came into contact with poverty, hunger, and disease; with the inability to treat a child because of lack of money; with the stupefaction provoked by continual hunger and punishment, to the point that a father can accept the loss of a son as an unimportant accident, as occurs often in the downtrodden classes of our American homeland.

And I began to realise at that time that there were things that were almost as important to me as becoming famous or making a significant contribution to medical science: I wanted to help those people.”

And he went on...

“How does one actually carry out a work of social welfare? How does one unite individual endeavor with the needs of society?

For this task of organization, as for all revolutionary tasks, fundamentally it is the individual who is needed. The revolution does not, as some claim, standardize the collective will and the collective initiative. On the contrary, it liberates one's individual talent. What the revolution does is orient that talent. And our task now is to orient the creative abilities of all medical professionals toward the tasks of social medicine.”



I have sadly not managed to get to Cuba but having spoken to those who have visited there and having read Steve Brouwer's book I believe there is something that we could learn from Che's life and his revolution.

A combination of Nye and Che is probably what is required for the NHS. Whether this march will create the momentum and lead to a new concordat and the new NHS remains to be seen, but one thing is for sure, it won't happen if people do not join. As always the enemy is apathy and I hope more people will support the #march4nhs – there are various ways to do so.



At Ripon Church



Drs Fiskens garden



Look at this cake!

Rajan Madhok

19 August 2014

DECLARATION: I am walking in personal capacity and the views expressed are mine alone, and are meant to inform not criticise or insult. If you like them, tell others and if you do not, tell me- just kidding, but do help me with my prejudices/arrogance. I may be old but can still learn. Blogs available at www.leadershipforhealth.com